

WASHINGTON - U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida) today commended the decision by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to reopen a portion of the Gulf fishery to commercial and recreational fishermen. The announcement was made earlier today at Captain Anderson's Marina in Panama City Beach.

"I applaud the decision to reopen this section of the Gulf fishery. Ever since oil began flowing into the Gulf, our fishermen – along with our small businesses, tourism industry and others – have been battling unfounded perceptions that seafood harvested in the Gulf is unsafe. This announcement will help put these false fears to rest, and it is welcome news to the thousands of jobs and coastal residents throughout the Gulf that rely on these waters to sustain their livelihood. I will continue working with NOAA and the other federal agencies to see that additional areas of the fishery are opened as quickly as possible."

Boyd also sent a letter to Administrator Jane Lubchenco calling on NOAA to extend red snapper season to allow our local fishermen and communities the opportunity to make up for economic losses caused by the BP oil spill. In the letter, Boyd reiterates the numerous economic contributions the red snapper season brings to the Panhandle and stresses the importance of extending this year's season:

"An extended red snapper season will allow our commercial fisherman the opportunity to get back on the water, and it will help bring recreational fishermen and tourists back to our coastal communities. These visitors charter fishing boats for entertainment, stay at our hotels and eat in our restaurants – activities that collectively help support our local economies. The hardworking people throughout the Panhandle deserve to have every opportunity available to help them return to their way of life as quickly as possible."

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